

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

The President  
The Whitehouse  
16 Pennsylvania Ave, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20500

September 12, 2019

Dear Mr. President,

We write today to express grave concern at your Administration's decision to divert Congressionally appropriated funds to build an unnecessary wall along the United States-Mexico border. Reports outline 127 military construction projects affected by your order—effectively syphoning over \$3 billion away from critical development projects previously agreed to by both the Department of Defense and Congress for what is essentially a unilateral and politically motivated idea.

This unneeded reallocation of resources has harmed a number of military installations, including the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, NY. In addition, this reallocation of resources will have an exaggerated impact where such installations are located in America's underserved and economically depressed communities. This is readily apparent in Puerto Rico, which has seen the largest reallocation of resources as compared to the rest of the country, in addition to their previous economic downturn and fiscal crisis that was exacerbated by a natural disaster that caused billions of dollars in damage and the deaths of thousands of our own citizens.

Your administration has repeatedly failed to live up to the promise of assisting these American citizens who are rebuilding their communities and their lives, despite the billions of dollars in disaster aid funding Congress appropriated to your Department of Housing and Urban Development to address specific recovery needs post-Hurricane Maria.

Now, your actions will delay or eliminate \$400 million in construction projects in these same communities in Puerto Rico, which continue to feel the effects of Hurricane Maria nearly two years later. The affected projects include a National Guard Readiness Center, a Power Substation, and a Maneuver Area Training Equipment Site. Not only will delay or potential elimination of these projects harm military readiness, it will eliminate hundreds of millions of dollars in economic activity for these communities, further denying the island of critical jobs in the short term and important economic investments for the future. Your indifference to the continued deterioration in Puerto Rico fails to take into account the continuing sacrifices of the thousands of Puerto Ricans serving in our military, including the paratrooper killed the day after these cuts were announced. These service members are being asked to deploy and fight for their country with the burden of worrying about the wellbeing of their families at home.

We ask that you reverse course and undo your actions for all of the military projects already approved by Congress, and ensure that no military construction funding will be allocated for your wall. Americans everywhere deserve a Commander-in-Chief who puts the needs of the country above political gain.

Senator Kirsten Gillibrand

U.S. Representative Nydia Velázquez

CC: John Michael Mulvaney, Chief of Staff to the President of the United States; Director of the Office of Management and Budget

CC: Acting Secretary Kevin McAleenan, United States Department of Homeland Security

CC: Secretary Mark Esper, United States Department of Defense